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EDITORIAL.

THE ONE PORTAL TO THE STATE REGISTER.

The Final Report of *The Lancet* Commission on Nursing established in December, 1930, with the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres as Chairman is now published, and we print on pages 70, 71 and 72 its Recommendations. It is a document which requires careful study, and we shall refer to these and to the subject matter of the Report in future issues. Meanwhile we may note that the Committee has evidently taken much trouble in collecting and collating information in relation to their terms of reference, i.e. "to inquire into the reasons for the shortage of candidates, trained and untrained, for nursing the sick, in general and special hospitals throughout the country, and to offer suggestions for making the service more attractive to women suitable for this necessary work."

Some of the conclusions at which the Commission has arrived are useful and commendable, although they contain nothing very new. Others are, in our opinion, inadvisable.

The principle of supreme importance underlying the Nurses' Registration Acts is the principle of the One Portal to the State Register of Nurses. When more than a quarter of a century ago we began to study the best methods for the organisation of Nursing Education and took counsel with medical men as to the effect of the Medical Acts, we were told by one after another that the weakness of these Acts was that they set up a General Medical Council for the United Kingdom which was to some extent an Educational as well as a Registering and Disciplinary body, but without the power of Examination.

Powerful Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons were already established which had the power to define standards of varying value, and to examine candidates for admission to the Medical Register. We were warned to avoid this initial mistake in drafting any Bills for the Registration of Nurses. Consequently, in a campaign extending over a quarter of a century the pioneers of State Registration of Nurses kept this principle before them, and after much opposition secured for trained nurses admission to the State Register through a One Portal.

We therefore profoundly regret to note that the Recommendations of *The Lancet* Commission on Nursing contain a proposal, the effect of which, if carried out, would be to break down the One Portal system, and once a breach is made, we may be sure it would be attacked from other directions, and other interested bodies would claim a like concession. For instance, the Royal Medico-Psychological Association—many of

the Medical Superintendent Members of which have always stubbornly and inadvisedly recommended probationers to work for its certificate, instead for those of the General Nursing Councils which alone confer the *imprimatur* of the State, would assuredly renew their propaganda.

The Lancet Commission recommends that "the Preliminary State Examination of the General Nursing Council should be divided into two parts: Part I.—Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene; and Part II.—Theory and Practice of Nursing.

"Part I. should, as a rule, be taken before, but not more than two years before, the nurse enters the wards. If a hospital wishes to admit a girl who has not taken Part I., or has failed in Part I., this should not be forbidden" (Why this provision, who is there authorised to forbid it?—ED.) "provided that she is not admitted to lectures in medicine and surgery, or to Part II. before she has passed Part I.

"The General Nursing Council should recognise as centres where the lectures for Part I. can be given, any institutions including secondary schools, where adequate arrangements have been made to give this tuition, and in which the tuition provided is not inferior to that provided at hospitals approved as Affiliated, Associated, or Reciprocal Hospitals. The lectures should be given either by a medical man or woman, or by one who holds a university degree in these subjects, or a certificate from one of certain specified physical training colleges.

"The General Nursing Council should exempt from any subject in Part I. anyone who holds a university degree which includes that subject, or has passed an advanced examination in it, e.g., an Intermediate examination in science."

Thus at the very outset of a Nurse's career it is proposed that by passing an examination of undefined quality, and whose knowledge has been tested by persons of unknown capacity for teaching or examining (in one instance we learn the Games Mistress was considered a suitable person) an embryo probationer shall be excused from passing Part I. of the Preliminary State Examination.

It is doubtless because the conclusions and recommendations of *The Lancet* Commission are largely those of the laity that its members have not appreciated how disastrous the result of this Recommendation would be.

Our advice to our colleagues is at all costs to maintain the Statutory privileges granted to them under the Nurses' Registration Acts. The One Portal to the Register is the most powerful safeguard to educational standards we possess.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)